

RIGHTS OF BIRTH PARENTS

Birth parent(s) have the right to send letters to the Virginia Department of Social Services to be included in their child's adoption record. In cases where the child was placed for adoption through an agency and that agency maintains a record, the birth parent(s) may also send letters for inclusion in the agency's record.

For adoptions finalized on or after **July 1, 1994**, when the adult adoptee is twenty-one years of age or older, the birth parent(s) may **apply** to the Virginia Department of Social Services for **identifying information** on the adoptee, such as his/her current name and address. Good cause must be shown for the release of this information. Good cause means consent of the adoptee on which identifying information is being sought.

Birth parent(s) have the right to request that an attempt be made by the agency initially involved in the adoption to convey critical medical, psychological and genetic information to the adult adoptee or adoptive parent(s). However, a physician or licensed mental health provider must certify in writing, with a clear explanation as to the reasons, that it is critical that the information be conveyed. Confidentiality of all parties is to be maintained by the agency.

If the agency involved in the adoption is willing, the birth parent(s) may allow that agency to act as an intermediary for the purpose of exchanging pictures and non-identifying information, such as letters, with the adoptive parent(s). The birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s) must both sign a written agreement to that effect.

<p>In <u>parental placement adoptions</u>, where the consent to the adoption was executed on or after July 1, 1994, any birth parent who executed a written consent to the adoption may view the entire adoption record. However, any criminal record checks for the adoptive parent(s), which show a criminal record conviction cannot be released.</p>
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